

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 188386

FOLLOWING TUNIS 5485 20 SEP SENT ACTION STATE INFO RABAT
TRIPOLI ALGIERS PARIS CAIRO RPT TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5485

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJECT: FURTHER INSIGHT INTO BOURGUIBA'S MEETING WITH
QADHAFI

1. DURING MEETING WITH HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR. SEPT. 19, LATTER INFORMED ME THAT HIS FATHER, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, VISITED LIBYA SEPTEMBER 1 AS RESULT OF PERSISTENT REQUESTS FROM QADHAFI. ACCORDING TO BOURGUIBA, JR., QADHAFI PLACED FOUR CALLS TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN COURSE OF LAST TWO DAYS OF AUGUST URGING BOURGUIBA TO COME AND TO BRING HIS WIFE, WASSILA. BOURGUIBA, JR. WENT ON TO SAY THAT HALF HOUR BEFORE HIS FATHER DEPARTED FOR TRIPOLI HE CALLED PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE TO INFORM HIM OF HIS TRIP. HE WANTED BOUMEDIENNE TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS GOING AT QADHAFI'S REQUEST.

2. ACCORDING TO BOURGUIBA, JR., WHO CLAIMED HE WAS PRESENT DURING TELEPHONIC EXCHANGE, BOUMEDIENNE ASKED WHETHER PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA WAS GOING TO TRIPOLI TO CELEBRATE EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN UNITY. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA REPLIED IN NEGATIVE, REMINDING BOUMEDIENNE OF HIS LONG-STANDING VIEW THAT UNITY NOT DESIRABLE OR ACHIEVABLE FOR SOME TIME.

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HE TOLD BOUMEDIENNE THAT HIS VISIT TO TRIPOLI WAS FOR

SOLE PURPOSE OF ATTENDING SEPT. 1 CEREMONY COMMEMORATING
FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE.

3. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT QADHAFI'S ABSENCE FROM
SEPT. 1 CELEBRATION WAS NOT RPT NOT "DIPLOMATIC", BUT
THAT QADHAFI WAS DEFINITELY ILL. HE FELT SUFFICIENTLY
BETTER FOLLOWING DAY TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND HAVE
A LONG CHAT WITH HIM. HE SAID THAT WHILE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA
IS PLEASED AT OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP CONSTRUCTIVE
RELATIONSHIP WITH QADHAFI, TUNISIANS REALIZE THAT QADHAFI
HAS NOT RPT NOT GIVEN UP HIS PLANS FOR ARAB UNITY,
INCLUDING WITH EGYPT.

4. RE RECENT REFERENCES BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO
BUILDING COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN TUNISIA, ALGERIA
AND LIBYA, BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT TUNISIANS HAVE IN
MIND EVENTUAL CONFEDERATION, WITH EACH COUNTRY RETAINING
ITS SOVEREIGNTY. REASON MOROCCO IS EXCLUDED AT OUTSET
IS BECAUSE OF QADHAFI'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO MOROCCAN
GOVERNMENT. ALSO HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TUNISIANS ARE
UNHAPPY WITH MOROCCANS SPREADING STORIES SEEKING TO UNDERCUT
MASMOUDI AND WASSILA BOURGUIBA, WHO ARE REPUTED TO BE
OPPOSED TO CLOSER TUNISIAN RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO.

5. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT ONE RESULT OF RECENT SUCCESSFUL
DIALOGUES BETWEEN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND QADHAFI HAS
BEEN THAT TUNISIAN-LIBYAN JOINT WORKING COMMITTEES, ESTAB-
LISHED AFTER QADHAFI'S VISIT TO TUNISIA LAST FALL, HAVE
BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE. LIBYAN PARTICIPANTS ARE ACTING
MORE PRAGMATICALLY AND OPENLY -- WHICH TUNISIANS ATTRIBUTE
TO NEW GUIDELINES FROM ON HIGH.

6. COMMENT: BOURGUIBA, JR. LOOKS AND FEELS FITTER THAN
EVER AND, AS A RESULT, IS TAKING A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN
AFFAIRS. HE ONCE AGAIN IS SEEING HIS FATHER ON A REGULAR
BASIS.
SEELYE
UNQUOTE RUSH

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